

Animal Care & Control



TASK FORCE COMMITTEE - - KICKOFF MEETING NOTES

October 28, 2014 from 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Maricopa County Supervisor Marie Lopez Rogers, District 5 opened the meeting and expressed her appreciation for the efforts being made to improve quality of life for our pets.

Deputy County Manager, Joy Rich, provided an overview of the process and that the goal for this committee is to identify specific deliverables and recommendations which a stakeholder chairperson from each subcommittee will later present to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Rich also announced a new tool to expand public participation and transparency for this process. A web portal www.CitizensForPets.org has been created for anyone interested to review notes, reference materials and provide comments or suggestions. Each week the comments will be compiled for the Chairperson of each subcommittee to share as they deem appropriate.

Assistant County Manager and Director, Dr. Rodrigo Silva presented an operational overview for the attendees. The presentation included locations, staffing, volunteers, programs, budget, statistics, and regulatory authority.

Matt Holm served as facilitator and explained how the issue gathering phase is approached. Members took turn in raising concerns to be addressed through the Task Force subcommittee process. The below items were noted:

1. Consistency between the East & West shelters – East dogs do not receive the Bordatella vaccine, while the dogs at the West shelter are vaccinated. East dogs get 4-in-1 vaccine and flea/tick treatment and only receive Bordatella if they go to PetSmart. The dogs actually stay longer at the East shelter. Bordatella vaccination will help prevent dogs from getting sick or infecting others.
2. Since a new shelter is not likely, consider constructing a “D-Wing” at the East shelter for sick animals to keep them isolated.

3. Review the evaluation process – Improper labeling both at time of intake and at the 72-hour evaluation. Further, the two evaluations may be redundant.
4. Usage / Capacity – the adoption wing at the West shelter is the smallest and needs to be larger.
5. Clarification of funding is needed between mandated and non-mandated programs.
6. More education of pet owners is needed on vaccines – Parvo on the increase.
7. Improved vet care involving surgeries and after-care – Rescues have had to take animals to another vet to correct surgeries or complications associated with poor quality of care.
8. Better training / cross-training of staff on the various processes – it seems someone always needs to track down more than one person to find someone knowledgeable.
9. Cleanliness – East shelter is always dirty.
10. Develop stronger internal strategies.
11. Foster Care Programs
12. Comprehensive onsite and offsite adoption programs
13. Pet Retention Programs
14. TNR – Trap Neuter, Return
15. Medical and Behavioral
16. Public Relations and Community Development
17. Volunteers
18. Proactive Redemption – Return to Owner of Lost Pets with involved field officers.
19. Rescue Groups

20. Compassionate and dedicated Director
21. Low Cost Spay and Neuter
22. Comprehensive Marketing Program – multimedia – donations, recruit and train more volunteers, customer service.
23. Mislabeling of breeds – every dog is labeled a Pit Bull, may be a Boxer Mix.
24. Focus on onsite public education and correct labeling. The kennel cards should be changed the minute the animal is off hold – Promote a sense of urgency – Include a statement like, “My hold is up – Ask about me!” People need to understand they can’t wait until the weekend to come and get their animals. The public needs to understand the 72-hour hold period.
25. Evaluations – Both County staff and HALO conducts evaluations. Although the evaluations may be different from one another, both should be available.
26. Payment Options – There should be options. It has been observed where people can’t get their dog back because it cost too much (boarding fees) but a stranger could adopt the same dog for less.
27. West Shelter needs better directions on where to go and all the areas animals are housed – An Entrance / Exit Kiosk may be an option.
28. Expand role of New Hope partners – New Hope can help more than just take animals.
29. It is time to make a capital investment in the East Valley shelter. It is not conducive for overall health and behavioral issues.
30. Cruelty cases – More information is needed on how to handle, what to do. A relationship needs to be built with the police so we can better inform the public.
31. Greater efficiency with New Hope processing
32. Improved customer service training for staff to help with adoptions

33. Fund 572 – it is explained that no general funds are received. This should be clarified. Adoptions don't cost as much as has been stated. Funding and marketing should be reviewed so the number of animals that have to be killed are less, this may include funding from the County budget. Donations are from outside public systems and it doesn't have to be all from donations.
34. More funding is needed for qualified vet staff.
35. Customer service – there needs to be more signage, more info, more greeters / volunteers, and info on payment options.
36. Marketing & Promotion through social media to have the community assist with the issues and solutions – public ownership of the solutions is important. Funding programs should be explored – Fundshare, etc.
37. There are approximately 500 volunteers at the West shelter. There needs to be more recruitment of volunteers and fosters.
38. HALO gets first choice of dogs so they take priority over adoptions. HALO charges more than the shelter to adopt, which seems unfair. HALO is able to return the dogs. The HALO contract should be reviewed.
39. Department appears to have 66% less veterinarians and techs than needed – 15 additional vets and 45 vet techs may be the correct staffing level.
40. Hours of Operation – The shelters need to be open every Sunday. The shelters should be open on Black Friday and have extended evening hours.
41. Better customer service is needed – there needs to a shift in mindset away from blaming the public, but rather educate and help. An example is the number of lost dogs over 4th of July each year.
42. Identify the reason for the decreased funding over the past few years.
43. Review the 72-hour hold period. In Arizona, you have to have the animal for 6 days to be the legal owner, so why is the hold period only 72-hours? The County should be held to the same standard. Many dogs are euthanized immediately after the hold,

an additional day or two can give them more of a chance. There seems to be space at the West shelter.

44. Consistency in practices across the East & West shelters is needed. East is known more as a safe haven for Pit Bulls and the West for Chihuahuas. It should be considered to make sure both shelters have a better balance of both.
45. Revise the department's mission statement.
46. Consider licensing / permitting boarding kennels given the recent tragedy at Green Acres.
47. Members need more information on the mandated versus non-mandated programs – what the County can and cannot control.
48. Review State statutes / legislation – there are too many animals and we need to reduce the number that go into the shelter. May be options for breeder specific legislation and mandatory spay & neuter.
49. MCACC should be reviewed holistically – evaluate the strategic nature of the organization, transparency, sustainability and accountability.
50. A more detailed roadmap of the process is needed – Members need to understand what is already being done before you can fix. Process flowcharts should be tied into ORG charts to know who is actually doing which items/tasks. Review complaints and categorize. Identify where the “log jams” exist to make the process more efficient.
51. There is a technical shortage of qualified veterinarian professional in the labor pool right now.
52. The 72-hour hold should be minimum, not maximum. The public should have the option of placing a down payment on an animal if the owner doesn't retrieve. The 6-day ownership law needs to be changed.
53. The policies and procedures need to be made available and reviewed.

54. Refinement of compassionate care at intake – animals are on the hard concrete floor without a blanket. Strays should be given a small meal rather than having to wait until the end of the day.
55. Implement special protocols for shy, fearful, or nervous animals to give them a better chance during evaluations.
56. Improve New Hope process for pulling animals – rescue pulls are not always caught and the animal is euthanized.
57. Improve New Hope process for payment – East shelter doesn't charge for the altering of animals and West does – Partners have to pay in advance for the spay or neuter and then come back a second time to pick up the animal.
58. The relationship between staff and volunteers needs to be improved. Volunteers seem to be doing more than staff.
59. New Hope Partners should be able to pay by credit card or have more payment methods.
60. The Call Center wait time is too long. It is often a 30-minute hold.
61. There needs to be more enforcement of the licensing law – it is not being enforced.
62. There needs to be an extra day between assessment and euthanizing an animal at 5:00 am following the 72-hour hold.
63. Increase community outreach to improve pet retention.
64. Create more space for animals.
65. Review how the E-List is developed. There seems to be discrimination of breeds for euthanasia (West euthanizes many Pit Bulls).
66. Increase staffing
67. Have absolute transparency online.

68. Animals need to receive proper medication so they aren't in pain.

69. Return To Owner program (RTO) with mandatory microchips

During a break, staff reviewed all of the issues and organized into three (3) subcommittees. The groupings were presented to the members who agreed to the following:

- Process and Service
- Budget & Funding
- Outreach & Marketing

Staff explained that overlapping issues is to be expected and if more than one group targets the same area of a particular issue, the Chairs from those subcommittees will make the decision which will take the lead.

Each member then volunteered to serve on one or more of the above subcommittees.

The subcommittees are to meet every other week beginning November 12, 2014.

Notes and information will be sent via email to the members as well as uploaded to www.CitizensForPets.org.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7:00 p.m.